

Message Text

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14

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 IGA-02 AGR-20 DEAE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 IO-14 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 TRSE-00

USIA-15 NSC-10 SCI-06 OMB-01 DODE-00 PRS-01 DRC-01

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P 171916Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1247

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 6305

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SNAR BL

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT BANZER--SUGGESTION FOR
COOPERATION IN DRUG FIELD

1. DURING CONVERSATION OCT 17, PRESIDENT BANZER SAID TO ME THAT HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN WORKING OUT A COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WITH THE U.S. FOR THE SUBSTITUTION OF OTHER CROPS FOR COCA IN THE YUNGAS AREA. HE SAID THAT FUNDS WOULD BE NEEDED ON A GRANT BASIS TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO FARMERS IN THAT AREA TO CEASE FROM PRODUCTION OF COCA AND TO SUBSTITUTE NEW CROPS SUCH AS COFFEE, FRUIT AND VEGETABLES. HE NOTED THAT COCA IS A HIGHLY PROFITABLE COMMODITY TO GROW AS IT PRODUCES THREE CROPS A YEAR. HE FELT THAT THE SMALL FARMERS IN THE YUNGAS AREA WOULD DO NOTHING IF THEY WERE FORCED TO REPAY LOANS EVEN AT LOW INTEREST RATES, BUT WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO OUTRIGHT DONATIONS TO PLANT SUBSTITUTE CROPS. HE SAID HE HOPED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE U.S. WOULD BE PREPARED TO RESPOND WITH FUNDS FOR THIS SPECIFIC PROGRAM.

2. I ASKED THE PRESIDENT WHETHER THERE WAS AN OFFICIAL OF THE BANZER GOVERNMENT WITH WHOM WE COULD WORK TO DEVELOP MORE SPECIFICS OF SUCH A PROGRAM INCLUDING AN ILLUSTRATIVE BUDGET AND PRECISE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WASHINGTON'S CONSIDERATION. HE SAID THAT AS OF NOW THE IDEA WAS HIS ALONE, BUT

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TION. HE SAID THAT AS OF NOW THE IDEA WAS HIS ALONE, BUT

THAT HE FELT THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE A DISCUSSION
WITH THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. HE VOLUNTEERED
TO TALK FIRST WITH THE MINISTER AND SUBSEQUENTLY WE FROM THE
EMBASSY COULD TALK WITH HIM ABOUT PRECISE DETAILS.

3. THE PRESIDENT ALSO NOTED THAT HIS INTEREST GOES
BEYOND THE CROP SUBSTITUTION ALSO TO THE ELIMINATION OF
THE COCA EATING HABIT IN BOLIVIA. HOWEVER, THIS PROBLEM
HE FELT WAS SOMEWHAT SEPARATE FROM THE CROP SUBSTITUTION
IDEA AS HE DESCRIBED IT TO ME.

4. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER AS THIS IDEA MATURES AND WOULD
WELCOME ANY INTERIM GUIDANCE WHICH COULD ASSIST US IN
EXPLORING THIS WITH THE BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES.
STEDMAN

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Message Attributes

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